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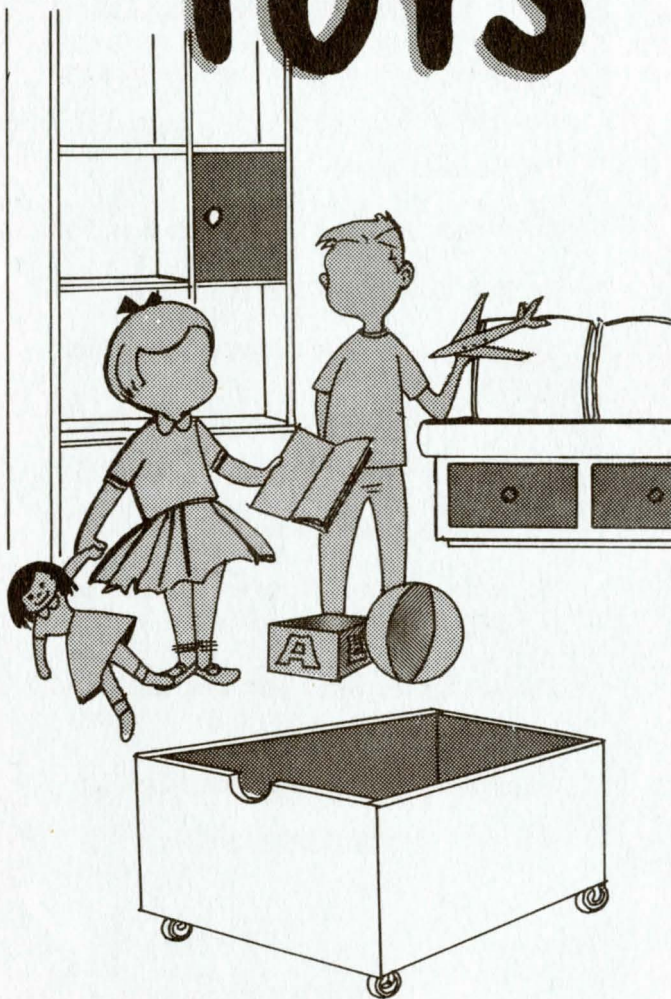
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Make Room for **TOYS**



EXTENSION SERVICE
UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE
AND U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
COOPERATING
E. F. FROLIK, DEAN E. W. JANIKE, DIRECTOR

PLAY IS NECESSARY IN A CHILD'S LIVING

TOYS ARE THE TOOLS OF PLAY

Toys wisely chosen help children —

TO ENJOY THEMSELVES

To satisfy the urge to use developing abilities

To increase motor skills

To gather and use information and ideas

To find expression for feelings

To make and develop social contacts

To understand the world around them

To enlarge their communication skills

To explore the arts and sciences

To build a store of appreciations and enjoyments

To strengthen inter-personal and family relationships

To develop hobbies and find careers

TO HAVE FUN.

Prepared by the

**ADVISORY COMMITTEE TO THE
AMERICAN TOY INSTITUTE**

MAKE ROOM FOR TOYS

By GRACE LANGDON, Ph.D.

Child Development Adviser to the

American Toy Institute

MAKING room for toys in your family living is one means of providing for your youngster's growing and learning as well as for his fun and enjoyment. IT IS JUST THAT IMPORTANT.

Toys are the tools of play and with them a child investigates, discovers, explores, experiments, creates.

With his toys a child plays out the things he sees going on around him and thus gets the feel of the world in which he lives.

With them he puts his ideas into action and as he does so he gathers in new ideas. With them he puts his newly developed abilities into use. Motor skills increase; he finds expression for his feelings; he builds a store of appreciations and enjoyments.

Toys bring children together in their play and thus have their part in the ups and downs of learning to get along together and in the development of social skills.

All told toys are a natural and an important part of a child's living.

Varied interests are evident as one watches a child's play. There is interest in active physical play; in creative constructive play; in imitative dramatic play; in manipulative investigative play.

These are interests that last throughout childhood and into the teens. The toys for carrying them on must, of course, change as the child grows. If all of the interests are to be carried it means many toys all of the time.

This brings us to the questions —

Where shall the toys be put?

How can room be made for them?

Suggestions are offered here to help answer these questions and they are given with three main ideas in mind:

- (1) That there should be provision for care of toys just as for all other family possessions.
- (2) That these provisions should be made to fit each family's individual convenience and way of living.
- (3) That provision for care of toys should be thought of as not merely keeping them out of the way but as a means, too, of helping a child to learn to care for them properly.

Some of the suggestions given will fit your home. Some will not. Use those that do. Leave those that do not. In one way or another, though, **DO MAKE A PLACE FOR TOYS** not only when your youngster is little but all during his growing years.



1. Think over all of the different kinds of toys your child has and needs and plan accordingly

This means to think of each child and of the different kinds of toys each enjoys. Don't neglect the older ones who need a place for their toys where investigative fingers of the little ones will not harm them.

Think of the toys for outdoor play as well as those for indoors. Think of the ones for quiet play and those for active play; the little toys and the big ones; the ones with pieces easily mislaid; the ones likely to be used every day and those used less often. Be sure to remember books, records and musical instruments.

Think of the toys in current use and those almost outgrown but still too loved to be discarded.

2. Look over your closet space

See if there is a closet that can serve as a garage for tricycles, wagons, doll carriages and the bigger trucks. Maybe a lower shelf can be taken out to make room for them.

If there is a closet that can be given over entirely to toys, fine. Leave space for the big wheel goods

below and put up shelves of different widths for different sized toys. Think of the boxed ones and plan for those of different sizes.

Use top shelves for toys infrequently used. A sturdy broad two-step stool will make it possible for the youngster to get most things for himself.

At the side put up a few clothes hooks for paint aprons and jumping ropes. Leave room on the floor, if possible, to stand the folding paint easel, folding blackboard, folding play table.

Build two or three shelves on the inside of the door with a three-inch front guard for balls.

Set a box or an umbrella stand in the corner for pogo sticks, stilts, golf sets, stick horses, depending on the age of the child.

Somewhere in a closet have a rod for dress-up costumes.

3. Consider possible cupboard space

If there is no cupboard available for toys it is time and labor well spent to build one, preferably with sliding doors. They are easier for a child to handle.

It utilizes all the space and is handy to alternate shelves of full width for bigger toys and step-shelves of half width for smaller things. Separate them at varying distances.

The spice racks made for kitchen cupboard doors are equally good for a toy cupboard, if the doors are swinging ones. Have several to take care of paste bottles, paint jars, and any small containers.

Small low cabinets with two or three shelves are useful in addition to or as a substitute for the taller cupboard. A two or three-shelf cabinet makes an excellent doll house.

You may want to give thought to sharing a low kitchen cupboard for some of a little child's house-keeping things. They like to play where the grown-up is working.

If there is a child of hobby age you might consider building a shallow cupboard eight to ten inches deep with shelves for hobby materials. Have a door

that can be closed and locked if the youngster wishes. It keeps his things safe from younger children. Make a hinged work shelf at sitting height with hinged peg leg that will support it when let down and fold back when shelf is lifted. Hook work shelf to upper cabinet shelf when not in use.

Cupboards and cabinets are needed for weaving materials, for all sorts of craft materials, for model kits, for games, and all kinds of boxed toys.

4. There need to be some open shelves

Nothing quite takes the place of open shelves with toys in plain sight. This is especially true for little children. "Out of sight out of mind."

They are the best places for blocks, and all that goes with block building, farm and village sets, animals, family dolls, little autos and trucks, housekeeping things, things for store play.

It is convenient to have open shelves in sections that can be arranged and rearranged. A good size for each section is 3 to 4 feet long, two or three shelves high, overall height 27 to 40 inches and shelves 12 to 14 inches deep.

A three-shelf section makes a good room divider and can be used to set off play space from sleeping space.

Having plenty of shelf space is important in teaching a child to keep his toys put away in an orderly manner instead of piled in a jumbled mess.

5. Some movable storage is handy

A section of open shelves on rollers that can be moved to follow the play makes picking up toys easy.

Bins on rollers that slide under bed or elsewhere are good for balls. Have two or three small ones rather than one large one.

Have the toy chest on rollers. (Be sure it is the kind that has a lid that will not fall down and bump head or pinch fingers.)

Try having a small wagon or cart with wheels that will not mar the floor for getting toys from place to place.

6. Make use of wall space

A large piece of perforated wall board with golf tees for hanging things makes a good place for musical instruments, for bags of small blocks and big wooden beads, for lightweight toys.

Provide some wall space for blackboard and bulletin board. The latter is fine for pinning up paintings, pictures, and cutouts. Keep thumb tacks handy but out of reach of the little child who might swallow them.

You may want to use wall space for books. Make a three-tier rack that will hold them upright. Make three narrow shelves with four to six-inch front guard. Hang it on wall or closet door.

Wall space can be used for electric trains. Make a drop-leaf table large enough for tracks to be fastened to it. Hinge to wall with heavy hook to hold it up when not in use and hinged peg leg to support it when in use. Provide space nearby for rolling stock and accessories.

7. Think about drawer space

These are good for dress-up accessories; for paper dolls and their outfits; for handicraft materials. Sometimes a drawer in the grown-up's chiffonier or kitchen cabinet can be set aside for toys.

Think about some drawer for keeping paintings and drawings. There is great satisfaction in having them to look at later.

Teach child to open and close drawers by using the handles. It prevents hurt fingers.

8. Provide containers for toys

Save sturdy boxes of all sizes to use for whatever fits them, especially ones with hinged lids.

The cartons that cottage cheese comes in are good for jacks, marbles, colored pencils. Use ice cream containers for larger things.

Sturdy baskets are handy for many toys. Try plastic laundry basket for balls, etc.

Change containers before they get battered and broken. That is part of the child's learning neatness.

The point is not only to take care of the toys conveniently but to help the child to learn not to throw them together to be broken and spoiled for play.



In thinking about making room for toys one naturally thinks about making room to use them.

A work-play table of some sort is a must for drawing, work with dough or clay, looking at books, tea party play, games.

A work shelf can be hinged to the wall if space is limited. Sometimes a window seat can be used for work space.



Making room for toys and their use is making room for both fun and learning for your youngster. When you do it you are helping him to grow and develop in a happy, wholesome way. It is well worth all the thought it takes to do it.



For help on selection of toys for different ages see
HOW TO CHOOSE TOYS, CHILDREN NEED TOYS,
and TOYS FOR ALL CHILDREN. Free from . . .

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